Some Diptera Collected by Water Traps in Norfolk Cereal Fields 1976-1977

By Ian F. G. McLean*

During a field sampling programme for cereal aphids and their natural enemies undertaken near Easton, Norfolk, several interesting Diptera were recorded when sorting catches from water traps. These traps were yellow horticultural bowls 8 inches in diameter and 3½ inches deep, filled wth water to which a little formalin and detergent were added. The bowls were then placed on tin trays nailed to the top of 2 x 2 inch wooden stakes approximately three feet above ground level, and therefore above the maximum height of the crop. The insects caught were removed weekly during the trapping period, and preserved in alcohol for subsequent examination. The field studied (with 20 traps operated in each field) were as follows:

1976 two winter wheat and one spring barley (grid reference TG 1210).

1977 two winter wheat (grid reference TG 1410).

Phthiria pulicaria Mikan (Bombyliidae) 2 ♀, 23-30.vi.1976. As far as I can determine until now this species has only been found in Britain on coastal dunes (Oldroyd, 1969). The nearest known locality for this species is 24 miles to the east at Winterton National Nature Reserve, Norfolk. The occurrence of this attractive little fly so far inland is therefore of some interest, possibly small colonies may be found inland on sandy areas, or alternatively the individuals recorded here may have flown inland. Formerly this area west of Norwich was partly sandy heath, though it is now cultivated for arable crops. The Breckland heaths of Norfolk and Suffolk are known to support a number of otherwise coastal insects, so collecting from flowers in these localities may yet show this fly to have been previously overlooked inland.

Stilpon nubilus Mg. (Empididae) 1 ♀, 30.vi.-7.vii.1976. This species is seldom recorded, probably because of its small size and retiring habits among low vegetation, like other members of this genus. It has subsequently been found commonly in a greenhouse at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, where I first discovered it in March 1978 running over gravel covered benches and amongst pots containing grass.

Chrysotoxum verralli Collin (Syrphidae) 1 ♀, 30.vi.-7.vii.1976 and 1 ♂, 14-21.vii.1976. I have only infrequently taken species of this genus in Norfolk, and so I was pleased to take this pair in an unexpected habitat.

Myopa testacea L. 1 ♂, 12-19.v.1977 and *Thecophora atra* Fab. (Conopidae) 1 ♀, 23-30.vi.1977. These two uncommon species, like the others listed above, were not otherwise observed in the area. This demonstrates the value of traps for detecting species which would not otherwise be collected. The use of such traps in more species rich habitats than cereal

* Ganavan, Guise Lane, North End, Bassingbourn, Royston, Herts. SG8 5PJ.

fields would doubtless be rewarded by a longer list of interesting species.

Coe, R. L. 1953. Diptera: Syrphidae. *R.E.S. Handbooks for the identification of British insects.* **X** (1).
Collin, J. E. 1961. *British Flies.* **6**: Cambridge.
Oldroyd, H. 1969. Diptera: Tabanoidea and Asiloidea. *R.E.S. Handbooks for the identification of British insects.* **IX** (4).
Smith, K. G. V. 1969. Diptera: Conopidae. *R.E.S. Handbooks for the identification of British insects.* **X** (3a)

The Observer's Book of Insects of the British Isles by **E. F. Linssen, F.R.E.S.** Published by Frederick Warne, London. pp. 191, 150 colour illustrations and 96 line drawings by **Gordon Riley** with 30 photographs. ISBN 0 7232 1574x. £1.25.

This latest publication in the Observer series, which maintains the expected high standard, was Linssen's last work before he died.

The earlier chapters, which deal with structure, behaviour, and classification, are concise and well informed and serve as a useful introduction to the general reader. There follows a key to Insect Orders and an illustrated account of some examples most likely to be noted in the field. The selection from such a vast number of species has been prompted by this aim. This means that many major families are unrepresented. In Lepidoptera, for example, theNoctuidae and almost all Micro families are ignored. The illustrations are clear and photographs well chosen. There is a final section on spiders, included because of their importance as insect predators.

An excellent little book for its purpose, which should lead the beginner onto more specialised literature. — E.H.W.

BEMBECIA SCOPIGERA SCOPOLI: ICHNEUMONIFORMIS D. & S. AT EASTBOURNE. — I was pleased to take two specimens of the Six-belted Clearwing in excellent condition, by sweeping grassy slopes at Pinnacle Point, Eastbourne on the 31st July, 1977. — JOHN PARRY, 38 Heather Drive, St. Michaels, Tenterden, Kent.

AGRIUS CONVOLVULI L. FLYING IN DAYTIME. — On Sunday September 19th, 1976, two bird-watchers at Porthgwarra, near Land's End watched *A. convolvuli* fly in, in front of a cold(?) front, and settle in a field at 2.30 p.m. — AUSTIN RICHARDSON, Orchard Cottage, Box, Stroud, Glos.

CORRECTION. — In my article "The Moths of Wimbledon: Further Records 1971-77" (*Ent. Rec.* 90: 231), the printers have omitted one line, line 3 under Noctuidae, and replaced it with a duplicated line 3 under Geometridae. The line which was omitted should read:
only, 19.8.76. *Lithophane leautieri hesperica* Boursin, 1 only,
— J. V. DACIE.